

Virginia

Commercial Grape Report



2003





Grape Production Decreases in 2003



Grape production in Virginia decreased in 2003 with the production of the Vinifera varieties accounting for the majority of the overall production. Producers harvested a crop valued at \$4.7 million receiving an average price of \$1,300 per ton. Virginia ranked 10th nationally in commercial grape production and 10th for bearing acreage.

Virginia's grape producers harvested 3,600 tons of commercial grapes in 2003, down nearly 22% from the 4,600 tons produced in 2002. Tons produced have not seen a value lower than 3,600 tons since 1998 when tons produced were at 3,200.

Virginia acreage (bearing and non-bearing) has increased from 1,418 acres in 1995 to 2,380 acres in 2003, a 68% increase over that time span.

The Chardonnay variety made up 34 percent of Virginia's total Vinifera production harvested in 2003. Also, Virginia's most popular variety accounted for 32 percent of all the Vinifera variety bearing acreage and 21 percent of the total vineyard acreage statewide.

Chardonnay, White Riesling, and Cabernet Sauvignon suffered significant production losses in 2003. Chardonnay producers harvested 223 tons less in 2003 and White Riesling producers harvested 164 tons less in 2003 compared with 2002. Also, Cabernet Sauvignon producers harvested 160 tons less in 2003 compared to 2002.



2003 Growing Season

The 2003 grape production season began with little to no spring frost and ideal temperatures. However, starting in May, the promising weather turned into an extremely wet spring and summer with below average temperatures. Wet conditions brought problems like powdery mildew, mold, and rot. Many growers found it difficult to maintain an effective spray regiment to combat the mold and mildew due to the continual rainy conditions. The below average temperatures during bloom resulted in poor fruit sets for many growers. Hurricane Isabel accounted for some damage to leaves and bunches along with bringing more rain, but most growers reported the majority of their crop damage was done before the hurricane. After Isabel, vineyards were hit with an early frost during the first week of October which forced many growers to harvest their grapes 2-3 weeks later than the average harvest time to allow for fruit maturation. The vineyards that persevered kept up with fungicide spraying, sacrificed portions of their crop for the success of the remaining crop, and spent many hours keeping the canopy under control allowing for proper air circulation. The 2003 season was a very challenging one, but Virginia's grape growers still managed to produce a high quality crop.

GRAPE PRODUCTION AND ACREAGE BY VARIETY, 2002-2003 ¹						
	Tons Produced		Bearing Acres		Non-Bearing Acres	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
VINIFERA						
Chardonnay	1,242	1,019	487	480	55	30
Cabernet Sauvignon	489	329	209	226	53	37
Cabernet Franc	462	466	187	200	80	82
Gewurztraminer	27	18	16	16	6	7
Merlot	390	317	123	163	66	65
Pinot Noir	80	48	29	30	5	9
Sauvignon Blanc	54	48	20	20	6	7
White Riesling	276	112	80	80	5	6
Viognier	299	206	87	92	35	57
Other White Vinifera	121	137	67	72	18	22
Other Red Vinifera	478	263	115	130	27	41
HYBRID						
Seval	126	71	49	46	6	4
Vidal Blanc	336	259	135	137	13	16
Chambourcin	56	89	41	45	11	27
Other White Hybrid	33	46	34	44	10	22
Other Red Hybrid	15	10	7	8	6	1
AMERICAN						
Norton	55	82	35	37	9	43
Seedless Table (all)	6	26	14	14	1	1
Other Red/Black						
American	12	25	41	42	3	3
Other White American	43	29	24	18	5	*

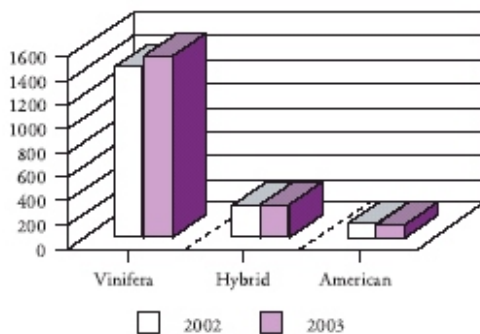
¹ 2002 data revised. * Some variety totals are not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations or may have no data.

GRAPE PRODUCTION AND BEARING ACREAGE, ALL TYPES ¹

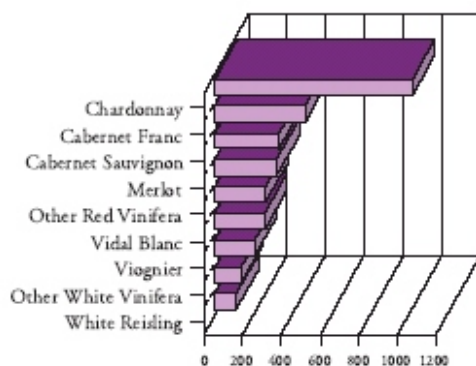
Rank	State	Tons Produced		Bearing Acres	
		2002	2003	2002	2003
1	CA	6,500,000	5,690,000	825,000	823,000
2	WA	332,000	344,000	49,800	52,000
3	NY	156,000	202,000	31,000	31,000
4	MI	42,700	94,500	12,300	12,600
5	PA	53,200	85,000	12,800	11,000
6	OR	22,800	24,000	9,500	10,100
7	OH	5,800	8,100	2,100	2,200
8	AZ	8,400	8,000	2,400	2,100
9	TX	4,700	6,000	2,900	2,900
10	VA	4,600	3,600	1,800	1,900
11	GA	2,800	3,100	1,100	1,100
12	AR	5,600	3,000	1,400	1,400
13	MO	2,900	2,800	800	850
14	NC	2,300	2,800	850	950

¹ Estimates for 2003 are preliminary

BEARING ACRES BY VARIETY



TOP TEN GRAPE VARIETIES



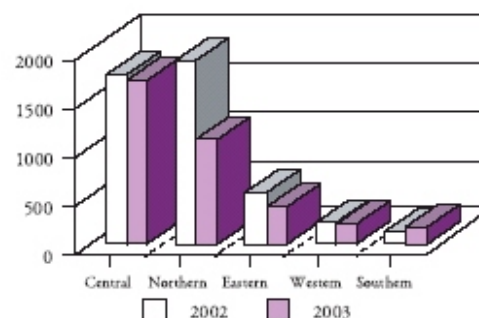
GRAPE PRODUCTION AND ACREAGE BY DISTRICT AND COUNTY, 2002-2003 ^{1 2}

	Tons Produced		Bearing Acres		Non-Bearing Acres	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
NORTHERN						
Culpeper	96	59	41	36	14	14
Fauquier	442	146	135	138	20	26
Loudoun	674	426	242	253	61	55
Madison	294	122	93	49	9	8
Rappahannock	111	86	43	50	4	9
Rockingham	35	49	20	20	1	5
Shenandoah	113	124	60	67	19	14
Warren	39	30	22	21	3	4
Other counties	76	28	44	46	38	21
District total	1,880	1,070	700	680	169	156
WESTERN						
Botetourt	*	95	*	42	*	5
Roanoke	70	20	30	29	2	*
Other counties	150	95	91	54	15	10
District total	220	210	121	125	17	15
CENTRAL						
Albemarle	780	680	322	330	50	105
Amherst	*	44	*	29	*	11
Bedford	12	25	7	15	4	17
Greene	40	41	31	30	4	5
Louisa	*	16	*	20	*	2
Nelson	160	209	57	74	48	50
Orange	620	559	171	172	14	13
Spotsylvania	33	*	22	*	4	*
Other Counties	95	98	80	90	26	27
District Total	1,740	1,670	690	760	150	230
EASTERN						
Essex	134	40	24	28	7	4
King George	71	50	30	31	*	*
Westmoreland	198	99	61	62	1	7
Other Counties	127	187	62	82	30	23
District Total	530	380	177	203	38	34
SOUTHERN						
Patrick	*	127	*	46	*	9
Other Counties	140	55	55	24	16	11
District Total	140	180	55	70	16	20
Other District Total						
	90	90	57	62	30	25
State total	4,600	3,600	1,800	1,900	420	480

¹ Some county totals are not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations. Production and acreage are included in district and state totals.

² 2002 data revised.

PRODUCTION BY DISTRICT



Vinifera: Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Gewurztraminer, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, White Reisling, Viognier, Other White, Other Red. Hybrid: Seyval, Vidal Blanc, Chambourcin, Other White Hybrid, Other Red Hybrid. American: Norton, Seedless Table (all), Other Red/Black American, Other White American

WHITE WINES

Chardonnay (Shard-don-a) - The most popular variety in Virginia, Chardonnay usually comes as a medium to full-bodied dry wine. It may be fruity with a hint of apples or citrus. It's versatility makes it appropriate with a wide variety of dishes ranging from seafood to lighter red meats.

Pinot Grigio (Pee-no-Gree-gee-oh) - Has a smoky bouquet with hints of spice. The taste is of ripe fruit, with hints of grapefruit or lemon, and a suggestion of sweetness in the after-taste.

Riesling (Reez-ling) - Has a spicy and fruity bouquet, usually off-dry or semi-sweet. Light to medium bodied. Sometimes produces flavors resulting in sweet wines that smell like honey and apricot nectar.

Gewurtztraminer (Geh-vertz-tram-me-ner) - Spicy and floral aromas. Light to medium bodied. Off-dry to semi-sweet.

Sauvignon Blanc (So-vin-yawn-Blanc) - Herbaceous, sometimes vegetal scent such as fresh herbs, cut grass or bell peppers. Range of styles from tart to ripe pineapple richness. Acidity makes them enjoyable with shellfish and seafood.

Seyval Blanc (Say-voll-Blanc) - Aromas compare to green apples. Light to medium bodied. Crisp and very dry.

Vidal Blanc (Vee-doll-Blanc) - Fruity aromas and flavors. Light to medium body and off-dry to semi-sweet.

Voignier (Vee-on-yea) - Spicy, with fruity and floral aromas.

RED WINES

Cabernet Sauvignon (Cab-er-nay So-vin-yawn) Complex in flavors than can emerge as currants, green olives, herbs, bell peppers, or combinations of these with mint and leather. Medium to full-bodied, tannic and dry. When young, good with robust meat dishes; older Cabernets go well with roasts, steaks, and cheeses.

Merlot (Merlow) - Cherry-like aromas with hints of Cabernet's herbaceousness. Softer flavor than Cabernet Sauvignon. Medium to full bodied, dry less tannic than Cabernet. Drinkable earlier than Cabernet, yet ages well.

Cabernet Franc (Cab-er-nay Franc) - Full bodied, dry wine with cherry flavors and violet aromas.

Pinot Noir (Pe-no-Nwahr) - Cherry aroma with rich flavors. Less tannic with less pigment than Cabernet and Merlot, so somewhat lighter. Drinkable at two to five years of age, and will improve after that.

Chambourcin (Sham-boor-san) - Rich grape aroma and flavor. Full bodied, dry.

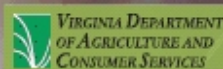
SPECIALTY WINES

Rose and Blush Wines - Usually blends of white wine with a small percentage of red wine, blended together to give them the blush of color. Usually light and fruity.

Cabernet Blanc (Cab-er-nay Blanc) - Made from the Cabernet Sauvignon grape, these wines get their salmon color from the process of removing the grape skin early in the wine making process. Light bodied and dry.

Sparkling Wines - Made in the Methode Champenoise: A table wine is refermented in a heavy glass bottle to produce a wine that has a bubbly effervescence. Light bodied, can be dry to semi-sweet.

Brut (Broot) - A sparkling blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Usually dry.



Agriculture Counts!

Special thanks to all producers who took time to participate in this survey!

About the Survey: The information presented in this report was gathered through a census of all known commercial grape producers in Virginia. To be considered a commercial producer, an operator must grow one acre or more of grapes. Data were collected during the months of November 2003 through January 2004 by mail and telephone interview. Information obtained during the course of this survey is completely confidential by law; for this reason, some county, regional, and variety breakdowns could not be published to avoid disclosure of individual vineyards.